

THE SOCIAL TEACHING  
OF THE  
LORD'S PRAYER \* \*

Charles W. Stubbs



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Lord's Prayer



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Four Sermons  
Preached before the University of Oxford

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## DEDICATORY LETTER

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*TO THE REV. W. R. HUNTINGDON, D.D.,  
Rector of Grace Church, New York.*

MY DEAR DR. HUNTINGDON,

WHEN I was your guest in New York last autumn, I preached, on your invitation, at Grace Church, a sermon on "The Social Teaching of the Lord's Prayer." This sermon I subsequently repeated in the chapel of the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, in Trinity Church, Philadelphia, and Trinity Church, Boston—in both of which churches I was glad to remember that I was occupying the old pulpit of the late Bishop Phillips Brooks—in Trinity Church, Columbus, Ohio, before the Convention of the St. Andrew's Brotherhood, in Christ Church, Meadville, Pennsylvania, and in Grace Church, Chicago. In response to a kindly-expressed wish by

many of my American friends in these various places, I now venture to publish four sermons on the same subject, preached during my term of office as Select Preacher before the University of Oxford. If, in its amended form, the thought which met with your sympathy as expressed in the shorter sermon, should seem to you attenuated rather than enriched by expansion, you will, I am sure, put that down to the inadequacy of my method, certainly not to any limitation of my subject.

For in America, no less than in England, the Churchmen of our generation are awakening to the largeness of the mission which is open to the Church by her recognition of the fact, that the message of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ is social no less than personal; that Christ, as the supreme Personality of all history, is the most potent factor of civilization; that the basis of all true Social Order, Social Progress, Social Justice, Social Duty, is to be found in the infinite creative good, the holy redeeming energy of the Fatherly Will of God, revealed in the Laws of the kingdom of Heaven, and setting like a tide into the currents of history.

In my shorter sermon I spoke of the Lord's Prayer as the Paternoster of the Christian

Socialist. Such a phrase did not, I hope, seem to you an unnatural one. You would understand that I used the phrase in the sense in which our common master in theology, Frederick Maurice, would have used it fifty years ago. And certainly we must all recognize that the personal cry of the humble and contrite heart, "God, be merciful to me a sinner," is individualistic in a sense which can never be true of the "Our Father." A Kyrie must almost always, by the necessity of things, remain something of an Individualist's prayer. A Paternoster belongs to a Socialist. For the very first word of that prayer, as it has often been pointed out, is a plea for universal brotherhood and social union, reminding us that when we pray for ourselves, we are praying also for our human brothers; that we cannot speak to God for ourselves without also speaking for them; that unless we carry their sins to the throne of God's grace, we do not carry our own. And the second word of that prayer is an appeal to the universal fact, not only of our creation by the Heavenly Father, but of our re-creation in the Incarnate Christ, reminding us that God hath "sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law,

that we might receive the adoption of sons," that we might never forget that the name of our God would lose all its meaning for us if we tried to use it merely as individuals, and not as members of a society, of a common family. It is, you will see, in this sense that, in the following sermons, I have interpreted the Lord's Prayer, the Prayer of Christ, as a Socialist, not an Individualist, Paternoster.

And yet you will also see, that if for the moment I think it is the Socialistic aspect of Christ's message that most needs to be emphasized, I am not proposing to depreciate the Individualistic aspect. Individualism is of the very essence of Christianity. But Individualism, to be truly ethical, must put itself wholly into social relationship. "Only a perfect individual," it has been well said by our friend Professor Nash of Cambridge, "perfectly knowing and mastering himself, can be truly in society; and only in society can a man become a perfect individual." To the completeness of Christ's gospel both aspects of His doctrine are necessary. Personal Salvation by Christ is true. But it is not the whole truth, nor the only truth. Social Redemption by Christ is true also. Protestant Individualism is true. But it is not the whole truth nor

the only truth. Catholic Socialism is true also. In God's plan for the world the perfection of the individual and the perfection of the society are both part of His design. There is a Christian ideal for society. There is a Christian philosophy of civilization. History has a moral goal.

And in the development of that divine plan each age of the world, each race of men, would seem to have its own special work to do—a fresh term, so to speak, to disengage from the unknown quantities of the social equation.

That both your Church and mine, the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, the National Church of England, may realize the grave responsibilities of that Social Mission, which it would appear to be the special office of our English Christianity at the present time to accomplish, is, I know, as sincerely your prayer as it is mine. That I was enabled last autumn to speak of this Mission in so many American pulpits, and to pass on to American Churchmen some, I trust, of the lessons which I had learnt in the Cambridge class-rooms of Maurice and Kingsley, of Lightfoot and Westcott and Hort, will always remain one of the great privileges of my life.

In venturing now to dedicate to you these

sermons on the same subject, preached before the University of Oxford, I am not only desirous of offering them as a memento of my very grateful friendship, but also as a testimony to my reverent admiration for one to whom a love of true scholarship and sound learning, of wise judgment and vigorous administration, has led his fellow-churchmen in America to look for inspiration and leadership.

Believe me,

My dear Dr. Huntingdon,

Very sincerely yours,

CHARLES W. STUBBS.

*Deanery, Ely,*

*Whitsuntide, 1900.*



# THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

## I

### SOCIAL ORDER

St. Matt. vi. 9, 10 : "Our Father which art  
in Heaven . . . Thy will be done in earth."

WHAT is the basic conception of a sound  
Sociology ?

In what appears to be God's plan for  
humanity, does the organism of human society  
belong by its essence to an invisible world ?  
Is there any spiritual relationship to which for  
men, as social beings, the universal bonds and  
duties of humanity may be traced ?

Looking back upon history, may we con-  
sider that the social evolution of which science  
claims to trace the method and purpose  
exhibits also the working out of a spiritual  
purpose and discipline for man ?

In that history is there any warrant for a

belief in an Ideal social state, conjectured as being perfected in the future, natural—and to be naturally evolved?—and if so, of what sort is that Ideal?

These are questions which in an age like our own, of scientific exploration on the one hand and of socialistic agitation on the other, seem to demand an answer from any Christian investigator of social philosophy, social morality, from any thoughtful citizen, that is to say, who believes that Christianity is the religion of the Eternal Word, “through whom all the ages were made,” and contains therefore the key to all the social problems which any one of those ages may propound.

I think that the answer to those questions may, in part, be found in the Lord's Prayer. At any rate I am proposing in the four sermons which it will be my duty to deliver in this place from time to time, to ask you to consider with me some of the elementary principles of human society which seem to me to be either implied or suggested by each of the five familiar clauses of the Paternoster.

This prayer, in its comprehensiveness, in its simplicity, has been for nearly nineteen centuries the Catholic prayer of Christendom. It has been translated into all languages. It



has been accepted by all Churches. In every age and in every society of Christians, the faithful follower of Jesus has taken this prayer upon his lips, and has ever found it to respond to his latest thought. It was enshrined at the very heart of the great Eucharistic sacrifice in all the ancient Liturgies of the Church. It is so placed in our own office of Holy Communion to-day. In the daily order, too, of Common Prayer it follows immediately upon the public absolution of the penitent people. It has equally been at the heart of the private devotion of the individual Christian all through the ages. It is the protoplasm of all Christian worship. It is simple enough for the little child. It is deep enough for the wisest theologian. For to both alike the "Our Father" opens and expands in meaning with the growth of human needs. In our age, with its new and developing social conditions, we shall, no doubt, outgrow many things. We shall not, I think, outgrow the Lord's Prayer.

In the early part of the fourteenth century there was existing in the city of York a religious guild, known by the name of "the Guild of the Lord's Prayer." In older days it seemed that there had been a custom to enact in the streets of the city a play setting forth

the goodness of the Lord's Prayer; "in which Play"—I quote from the old Guild ordinance—"all manner of vices and sins were held up to scorn, and the virtues were held up to praise. . . 'Would that this Play,' the people said, 'could be kept up in this city for the health of souls and for the comfort of the citizens and neighbours!' And so the Guild was formed of 'bretheren and sisteren of good and worthy businesses to keep up this Play to the glory of God, the maker of the said Prayer.' And a table was set up at the Guild expense, and hung against a pillar of the Cathedral Church, showing the whole meaning and use of the Lord's Prayer: and whenever the Play was played the Guild members rode with the players through the streets, and once in every six weeks the bretheren and sisteren met together to offer special prayers 'for the good governance of the kingdom of England.'"

Times and customs have changed greatly in England since those old days. I at least have no desire to restore them. But there is something in those old times which it is worth while to restore. I mean that spirit of social devotion and worship which, under whatever even superstitious form of ritual, or quaint aspect of drama, did enable the Englishman

of those days to realize intensely his religion in its bearing, not only on his own individual soul, but also on wider human society, did make him associate the teaching of the Lord's Prayer, not only with his private devotions or the highest acts of Christian worship, but also with the daily bonds and obligations of his social and civic life, his conduct of good and worthy business, the health and comfort of citizens and neighbours, the good governance of the kingdom of England.

That spirit is as much needed as ever it was for the wholesome discipline of the body politic. It is in that spirit, at any rate, that I would wish you to consider some of the social lessons which it seems to me we may profitably learn from a study of the Lord's Prayer.

Our subject naturally divides itself into five divisions corresponding with the five chief clauses of the prayer. We may set it out, I think, conveniently in this form.

I. Social Order:—its basis in the Fatherly will of God. "Father . . . Thy will be done in earth." Evolution the way God makes things come to pass.

II. Social Progress:—its warrant in the sublime optimism of the Incarnate Son. "Thy kingdom come . . . in

earth." The royal law of neighbourliness.

III. Social Justice :—its differentiation of life from livelihood. "Give us this day our daily bread." God's bread, not devil's bread.

IV. Social Duty :—the identification of duty with debt to neighbour and to God. "Forgive us our debts." Forgive us our failures in social duty.

V. Social Discipline :—the pressure of heredity and environment, and the ministry of the free and Holy Spirit of God. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." A revolution of thought must precede a reformation of society.

### SOCIAL ORDER.

Our subject, then, to-day is the basis of Social Order.

"Our Father which art in Heaven . . . Thy will be done in earth."

It is possible, no doubt, to contend—it has indeed not seldom been contended—that there is in these words no specially Christian revela-

tion of the basis of the social organism, or indeed of any fundamental idea of Christianity, because in this clause of the Lord's Prayer Jesus was simply adapting to His own purpose a doctrine already in common use in the Talmudic and Rabbinical literature of His age, and one which rested of course ultimately on the Old Testament scripture itself. The fact is undeniable. The writings of the Jewish fathers do contain many expressions, almost verbatim, which are used by Jesus in the Prayer and in the fuller teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. Those of you who care to do so will find the parallelisms drawn out with much careful scholarship in an excursus on the subject appended to Dr. Charles Taylor's *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*. But indeed we may go further, and say that there is not anything in the Lord's Prayer which might not have been the prayer of any pious Jew of Christ's time. But what of that? A truth revealed by God can never be a truth out of relation with previous thought! The originality of Jesus is not surely to be measured only by the critical canon of one particular age. That would be to blind ourselves to all that is involved in the doctrine of the Incarnation. Indeed, it is only as we realize Christ,



not only in connection with the gospel revelation, but as the pre-incarnate Son of God, the same Divine Word, who is and was and ever has been the light and the life of men, who before what we call Christianity wrought first in mankind at large through the avenues of conscience, and afterwards more particularly in the Jews through a special though still imperfect revelation, that we shall find the difficulties to fall away which beset the language not only of the Sermon on the Mount or the Lord's Prayer, but much else in the New Testament writings. We must predicate of the Word not only prior but absolute existence. Let us make this then our starting-point, and read boldly into the language of the Lord's Prayer, and especially into its opening clause, that Idea of God, that conception of the Personality of Christ, which is implied in the Doctrine of the Incarnation.

For my purpose to-day I may venture to state that doctrine broadly thus:—The Christian creed announces to us in the first place, not a world-wide philosophy, nor even a universal religion, but it introduces us to a Supreme Person—Jesus Christ our Lord. In heaven as on earth, over things invisible as over things visible, over things immaterial

as over things material, this Person is represented as supreme.

In the natural creation, in the material universe, His supremacy is that of the Eternal Reason, the pre-incarnate Word of God, the Logos of Greek thought, by whose agency the world of matter was created, and is sustained, who is at once the beginning and the end of material things. "All things have been created through Him and unto Him."

And in the spiritual creation, in the Church, this same Person is represented as the inspirer and the illuminator of man in his intellectual being, the light and the life of humanity, the revealer to man of the Divine character, "manifesting God with increasing clearness at each successive stage in the great scale of being," until in the fullness of time He Himself "for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and—was incarnate—was made man." And from this conception of the personality of Christ, His mediatorial function in the Church flowing from His mediatorial functions in the world, there follows not only the redemption, but the exaltation of human nature, the consecration of all human relations with the visible creation, and in connection with the conquest of sin and death,

there opens up the vista of the glorious destiny of the children of God, proposed before the world was.

Now this doctrine of the pre-incarnate Word and the Incarnate Christ, though it undoubtedly stands in the forefront of the prologue to St. John's Gospel, though it is hardly less prominent in the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and though it finds special emphasis in the two great Christological passages in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, and though lastly it forms the groundwork of the great Creed which is common to all the Churches, in reality exercised very little influence over the direction of theological thought in the early part of this century.

The loss has been most serious. It must be more than twenty years now since Bishop Lightfoot, in his Introduction to his Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians, said : " How much our theological conceptions suffer in breadth and fullness by this neglect a moment's reflection will show. How much more hearty would be the sympathy of theologians with the revelations of science and the developments of history if they habitually connected them with the operation of the



same Divine Word who is the centre of all their religious aspirations it is needless to say. Through the recognition of this idea with all the consequences which flow from it as a living influence, more than in any other way, may we hope to strike the chords of that 'vaster music' which results only from the harmony of knowledge and faith, of reverence and research."

That hope of Dr. Lightfoot has during the last decade of the century been largely fulfilled. It must be obvious to any one who is in the habit of listening to any of the more thoughtful preachers of our day, that the Doctrine of the Incarnation finds a place and a prominence in their pulpit-teaching which was quite unusual thirty or even twenty years ago.

It is not quite pertinent to my present purpose to trace the history of that readjustment of doctrine, that "re-focussing of truth" in the scheme of Anglican Theology. You may read the chapters of its modern history in such books as Professor Fiske's *Cosmic Philosophy*, *Idea of God*, and *Destiny of Man*, in Dr. Allen's *Continuity of Christian Thought*, in Dr. Bigg's *Bampton Lectures* on the "Christian Platonists," in Dr. Heard's *Hulsean Lectures*

on "Alexandrian and Carthaginian Theology," and more readily in Mr. Aubrey Moore's and Mr. Illingworth's brilliant essays in *Lux Mundi*.

But it is pertinent, I think, to my present purpose, and certainly historically just, to note that this readjustment of doctrine, which has so intimately affected the later character of the Anglican Revival, had taken place completely in the teaching of one great Christian doctor—perhaps the greatest—of this century more than sixty years ago. I mean in the writings of Frederick Denison Maurice.

You will pardon a Cambridge man, I hope, when he says that "the Oxford Movement" is hardly the full equivalent of the "Anglican Revival"; and further forgive the partiality of an old pupil of Frederick Maurice, if he says that it has sometimes seemed to some of us that here in Oxford your younger generation of theologians, who "regard themselves as adjusting the High Church theology of Dr. Pusey and his generation to the newer knowledge of our day," do not, at least publicly, sufficiently recognize the debt which they owe to Maurice for the lead which he gave more than sixty years ago.

Indeed, there are those who think that it

would not be too much to say that it was the doctrine of Maurice rather than that of Pusey or Newman, which for forty years—Maurice began his work in 1835, he died in 1872—“kept the whole forward movement in the social and political life of the English people in union with God, and identified with religion,” a doctrine moreover which, idealized and transfigured by two great poets of the century, Tennyson and Browning, dominant in the teaching of the Cambridge schools of Lightfoot and Westcott and Hort, assimilated as it would seem almost unconsciously by the younger Oxford theologians of the *Lux Mundi* school, has during this last decade of the century turned so wisely the current of our English Christianity to the consideration of the great social problems of the age, and is at this moment so profoundly affecting, moulding, inspiring, transfiguring the social ideals of the present.

I do not mean, of course, to assert that the doctrine of the Incarnation in its modern re-statement originated with Maurice. He himself freely confessed his obligations to Coleridge, to Erskine of Linlathen, to Alexander Knox. And the history of the heredity, so to say, of the doctrine may easily be traced backwards through the Cambridge Platonists of the seven-

teenth century—Cudworth, Smith, Whichcote—through the Oxford reformers of the fifteenth century—Colet, Erasmus, and More—back to the great Greek Christian Fathers of the early Church—Clement, Origen, Hippolytus. The doctrine was not, of course, new; but Maurice was the writer who first in our century set it forth in the new form which the new age needed.

Compare, for example, Mr. Illingworth's masterly essay in *Lux Mundi* on "The Incarnation and Development," especially the passage towards the close of that essay beginning with the words—"The Incarnation opened Heaven, for it was the revelation of the Word; but it also reconsecrated earth, for the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us"—with the chapter in Maurice's *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy* on "Philo and the Alexandrian School," or with the later chapters on the Neo-Platonists, and you will see how clearly sixty years ago Maurice had grasped the truth of the creative and administrative and redemptive work of the pre-incarnate Word and the incarnate Christ, which our age needed, to give unity and breadth and fullness to its theological conceptions, and also no less to connect for the Christian evolutionist both the

revelations of science and the developments of history—the study of which has influenced so deeply the later phases of the Anglican Revival—with the operations of the same Divine Personality.

And whatever may be the fact with regard to pure theology, certainly in regard to what we may call applied theology, it cannot be denied that it is to Maurice's teaching that we must look back chiefly for the filiation of those ideas, commonly called Christian Socialist, which have hitherto so happily for England succeeded in turning democratic aspirations and hopes, both political and social, from revolutionary courses into channels and methods which have led on the whole to stable and conservative, and therefore permanent progress.

For no one who knows anything of the social and industrial history of England during the last half-century, can doubt that when Maurice and his friends, the Christian Socialists of 1848, challenged our modern consecrated *régime* of individualism and competition, refusing to accept as final the pessimistic dogmas of an economic science which had forgotten that in the last resort the problem was not about wealth but about men; that when



they endeavoured to formulate a social science in which co-operation rather than competition should be the true law of industrial relationships, and when they did, in fact, succeed in laying the foundation of what has proved the most hopeful industrial experiment of the century—the organization of the great co-operative movement—that when they fought the early battles of sanitary reform, and laid down those principles of the science of public health, whose legal enforcement now forms so large a part of the administrative work of municipalities and other local authorities; and that when, finally, because the public remedy of social evils always runs up at last into moral considerations, they endeavoured, and not altogether in vain, to awaken the conscience of both the English Church and the English people to regard all these great questions from the Christian point of sight; no one, I say, can doubt that the doctrine of the Incarnation, as Maurice accepted it, as the true basis and centre of all Christian social philosophy, was the master note of their teaching.

And because this was so, because his social teaching was always in close touch with his theology, Maurice could never endure any

action on the part of his Christian socialist followers which seemed to imply that society *ought not to be* built up on the selfish and competitive instincts of mankind. It was of the essence of his Christian faith to believe *that it was not*. To him the very first words of the Paternoster, of the "Our Father," were a proof that God's order *was* founded on mutual love and fellow help. Selfishness and competition were the direct results of man's disorder. Human society, on the warrant of that prayer, he held to be a Divine creation. He could not therefore tolerate any method or system which seemed to imply that it was man's business to construct some new and improved form of society—"a new moral order," as the Owenite Socialists were fond of asserting—rather than to assume that the existing form of society, with its divinely created obligations of the family, of the neighbourhood, of the nation, was the best, if men would only pay reverent homage to these obligations.

"Christian Socialism," he said, "is in my mind the assertion of God's order. Every attempt, however feeble, to bring that order forth I honour and desire to assist. Every attempt to hide it under a great machinery,

call it organization of labour, central board, or what you like, I must protest against as hindering the gradual development of what I regard as a Divine purpose, as an attempt to create a new constitution of society, when what we want is that the old constitution should exhibit its true functions and energies."

I well remember hearing him, in the course of lectures on *Social Morality* which he was then delivering at Cambridge, use these words—"According to the Christian creed, the authority of a father, the obedience of a son, lies at the root of the universe, is implied in its constitution. In a living spirit the authority and the obedience are for ever united. After this image it is declared that man is created: the perfect humanity is in the Son of God. . . . Absolute faith or trust in His Father is declared to be the characteristic of Him who took man's nature upon Him; such faith or trust, exalting men above themselves, makes them partakers of the true human life. The Son of Man is announced as the Brother of all men, one who has entered into the conditions of the poorest, the most suffering of them, one who has endured their death. Men are proclaimed to have a universal brotherhood in Him. Lastly, the principle of



the kingdom of Heaven is said to be that the chief of all is the servant of all: the King of Heaven having become in very deed a servant of His creatures. . . . This belief in an invisible and righteous government, a government over men, over the earth, was involved in the original idea of the Church. If at any time the teachers of the Church lose their faith in this invisible government, they become eager to define their own rights and powers, so the sense of service is lost, so the domestic character of the government is lost."

I have often thought of these words of my old Cambridge teacher during the social and economic difficulties and controversies of the last thirty years. They are quite simple words. But they contain, so at least it seems to me, a more helpful interpretation of the true constitution of human society than any that I can find in all the other books of sociology that I have ever read.

At any rate that is the interpretation which I desire to pass on to you to-day.

Place these words of Christ, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. . . . Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," side by side with the life of Christ on earth, that perfect exhibition of the harmony

of the human and Divine will, and in the light which is thrown upon that life by the doctrine of His pre-incarnate personality, and do not these principles converge to strengthen our faith in God's good government of the world?

*Jesus Christ in proclaiming a fatherly will as the origin of all life, and as the root of humanity, reveals to man the Divine order under which he is living.*

*There is therefore an order of society which is the best, and towards this order the world is gradually moving according to a definite Divine plan. God has been working and still works, and man's duty and true effort lies in letting God work, through conscious human wills.*

My friends, without that faith I confess I cannot see how we are to reconcile the perplexities which abound in the order of nature and of society, much less account for the existence of a Church which uses the Lord's Prayer, which starts from a belief in a Father in heaven. Without that faith I do not see how we are to answer the arguments of the social agnostic, of the man who contends, as does the naturalist philosopher in Mr. Balfour's book on *The Foundations of Belief*, that the

very existence of man is an accident, that his history of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspiration, is but a brief and transitory episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets.

But with that faith all is changed. God has a plan for the world, a great educational plan by which both the perfection of the individual and the perfection of the race is to be accomplished. Order and progress in human civilization are real. Progress is not only a vital fact of human existence, it is its vital law. The principle of human evolution is true, for it means a striving ever towards the holier and the happier. There may be almost infinite powers against us, but at least there is a deep-laid scheme working towards goodness and happiness.

Of course I am quite well aware of the objections that may be advanced against this doctrine. They are objections in these days which are common to the philosopher and the man in the street. For example, some months ago I happened to be preaching in Leicester on this same subject. At an open conference held afterwards for the purpose of discussion and inquiry, I was asked this question by a

working-man in the audience—"The lecturer speaks of God's good government of the world, and endeavours to base his faith in a supreme will on the facts of social evolution, but is it not true that in the processes of evolution vice has been evolved as well as virtue, evil men as well as good men, a kingdom of the devil as well as a kingdom of God? How then, with these facts to face, can he, without violence to his reason, believe in a good God?"

The criticism, as you see, was a pertinent one. It is an echo, of course, of the arguments with which many of us were familiar thirty years ago in John Stuart Mill's *Essays on Religion*.

"Everything," said that writer, "which the worst men commit, either against life or property, is perpetrated on a larger scale by natural agents. Nature has *noyades* more fatal than those of Carrier; her explosions of fire-damp are as destructive as human artillery; her plague and cholera far surpass the poison cups of the Borgias. Even the love of 'order,' which is thought to be a following of the ways of nature, is in fact a contradiction of them. . . . Anarchy and the Reign of Terror are over-matched in injustice, ruin, and death by a hurricane and a pestilence."

Four years ago Mr. Huxley repeated Mill's arguments, and carried them perhaps a step further, in his Romanes Lectures in this place.

"Cosmic nature," said that great writer, "is no school of virtue, it is the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature. . . The thief and the murderer follow nature just as much as the philanthropist."

In my next sermon on "Social Progress" it will be necessary to deal with the fallacy of this argument in further detail. For to-day I must be satisfied to quote to you a passage from a book of "Christian Apology" which I venture to think is among the most valuable that our generation has seen. Dr. Abbott, in *The Spirit on the Waters*, has said, in answer to Mr. Huxley's argument, "We contend not only that cosmic nature must be called a 'school of virtue,' but also that it ought not to be called a 'school of vice.' . . . 'Cosmic nature,' taken in its fullest sense, shows signs, not only of ethical and non-ethical, divine and diabolical *results*, but also of an ethical or divine *purpose*, subordinating the non-ethical to the ethical, the diabolical to the divine. Tiberius is not to be regarded as having followed nature (in the full sense of cosmic evolution) 'just as much as' Socrates. It is as false to say



this as to say that a mad hound, snapping at the rest of the pack, follows nature 'just as much as' the dogs that are sane. 'The thief and the murderer' on the whole have not survived in the struggle for existence, but have gone to the wall, thereby proving that they were against 'cosmic nature.' If they had regarded cosmic nature as a school of virtue, and obeyed the teaching, they would have, on the whole, survived; not having done so, they have, on the whole, perished. . . . We simply point out, therefore, that unbelievers who reject a 'belief' in a good God, under cover of appeal to cosmic nature, are disowned by the power to which they appeal. She rejects them, as she rejects the murderer, the thief, and the adulterer. They can all say, 'Cosmic nature made us what we are.' Cosmic nature answers by destroying them. . . . We contend then that cosmic nature impels us to believe reasonably in a good God, rewards us if we do so, and punishes us if we do not. This being so, sensible and reasonable people, who find it difficult to believe, ought not (as it seems to us) to lay the blame on nature or reason, but on some violation of nature and reason in themselves, or possibly on self-deception" (pp. 19-22).

My friends, I venture to say, that the man who has mastered this doctrine, he who recognizes the slow and subtle process of evolution as the way in which God makes things come to pass, as the action of the Eternal Word "through whom the ages were made," has found a Christian faith, which so far from cheapening, as some narrow-minded religionists would tell us, the value of human life, adds immeasurably to the glory of man's destiny, enlarges tenfold the significance of human life, for such a faith shows us how, after all, the grand sweep of things is from the lower to the higher, the vast amount of suffering and struggle and competition, on the whole, doing the work of raising nature, material and human, into a higher condition, making us all feel with St. Paul, that "the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

"It is hard to believe in God," said Lord Tennyson once, "but it is harder not to believe. I believe in God not from what I see in nature, but from what I find in man. . . . God is Love, transcendent, all-pervading. But we do not get this faith from nature or the world. If we look at nature alone, full of perfection and

imperfection, she tells us that God is disease, murder and rapine. We get this faith from ourselves, from what is highest within us, which recognizes that there is not one fruitless pang, just as there is not (as Browning says) 'one lost good.' "

We all know how he expressed the same thought in immortal verse in the cantos of the *In Memoriam* :—

" I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;  
Nor thro' the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice ' believe no more,'  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd ' I have felt ! '

No, like a child in doubt and fear :  
But that blind clamour made me wise ;  
Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I am beheld again  
What is, and no man understands ;  
And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding men."

In our reading then of human life and of



cosmic nature let us cherish this optimistic faith—

“Nature at worst always implies success :  
Earth changes, but the soul and God stand sure.”

Two central verities, the Divine ordering of the social organism based on the revelation of a Fatherly will, the steady progress of human character under pressure of the eternal law of filial existence, face us daily when we use the words—“Our Father which art in Heaven. . . Thy will be done in earth,”—and find too irresistible a confirmation in history and consciousness to leave room for doubt. All are parts of a Divine Order. That order is beneficent and progressive. The apparent exceptions are but modes of fulfilment out of which growth in wisdom builds new assurances of faith.

## II

### SOCIAL PROGRESS

St. Matt. vi. 9, 10: "Our Father which art in Heaven . . . Thy Kingdom come . . . in earth."

WAS Jesus Christ an optimist, a social idealist?

Was the "kingdom of God" for which He taught His disciples to pray, a Utopia, or a practical possibility? Does the alternative term, "kingdom of Heaven," imply perhaps only an ideal kingdom, conceived, as it were, in poetic thought, as hovering above all actual societies, civil and sacred, like the *Republic* of Plato, or the *De Monarchia* of Dante, or the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More, to be realized nowhere on this earth, its true home being among the romantic visions of a supersensible dreamland?

Jesus Christ was certainly no idealist, no

optimist in the common sense of the word. He was under no deception, either of sentiment or pathetic fallacy, as to the actual facts of existence. For from the first He certainly taught that the world was full of evil ; that an adversary, an "evil one," was contending against God and against goodness ; that entrance into the "kingdom of God" was difficult, implied a strain and an effort to which all would not be equal ; and that the keenest trials awaited both Himself and His disciples before the consummation could be attained.

But that Jesus Christ was an idealist, an optimist, in one very true sense, we may infer from the effect which His teaching had upon the minds and conduct of those who first heard it. The disciples of Christ welcomed His teaching as good news ; they conducted themselves as men who had received a message of gladness and joy. They were no mere pilgrims faring to a distant shrine, grim, gloomy ascetics, self-concentrated devotees, doing penance for their sins. They fasted not like the disciples of John Baptist ; they were rather like people going to a wedding, it was said, children of the Bride-chamber glad in the sunny presence of the Bridegroom, a happy company of ex-

pectant enthusiasts, joyous, hopeful, free, like men looking on towards a golden age just within sight—a city of God, whose gates were open to all comers on one condition only, that they conduct themselves as good citizens once they are within its walls—a city of God which is a kingdom of grace, not because it is a kingdom of holiness, but in order that it should become such.

And it is because of this optimism of Jesus Christ, and of its origin, that not only the disciples of old had grounds for their attitude of joyous enthusiasm, but that we who claim to be His disciples now have justification for the same attitude. We believe that Jesus was the prophet of immortality and the prophet of progress. We believe that He was the prophet of the future, because He fixed His gaze on the present with such intense concentration of vision that He pierced into the very heart of things, and saw there the everlasting fountain of the soul, the inexhaustible source from which the stream of human progress ever flows. We believe that He was the prophet of the future, because He was the poet of the eternal present, because He saw the eternal beauty of the present, the beauty of its sorrow as well as its joy.

*Times and seasons!*—this was the thought at the heart of His message—*times and seasons, they pass and are swallowed up, but eternity is now and ever shall be. Each place, each world, may change and disappear, but I remain, and shall always say Here I live. Personality persists. Character is eternal. The kingdom is within you. The soul is immortal, its kingdom of Heaven is here, its eternal world is now!*

And because He who held that faith was one who was called the Man of Sorrows, the despised and rejected of men, who had nowhere to lay His head, one who had more intimate acquaintance with pain than any one before or since, whose own life was the typical tragedy of mankind, and yet was one of whose sublime optimism, of whose radiant view of human nature, and its potential goodness, no word of recantation could be drawn, either by the moral agony of which in the garden of Gethsemane the bloody sweat was the symbol, or by the physical agony of which on the mount of Calvary the death on the cross was the reality, we believe that we too have grounds for our optimistic faith in the present kingdom; faith in human nature as it exists in the thought of God; faith in man as he ought

to be and will be ; faith in God as the Father of man ; faith in man as the son of God ; faith that the outcome of the evolution of all things will be found to be good ; faith that good will ultimately prevail over evil ; faith that sin itself will ultimately be seen to have been subordinated to the purpose of a higher righteousness than could have been attained if man had never sinned.

Let us consider a little more in detail the grounds of this faith.

The kingdom of Heaven—the kingdom of God—the kingdom of Christ—there are no more familiar phrases to us in Holy Scripture than these. They bring vividly before us the primitive ideas of Christianity. They are an epitome of the life and mission of Christ, of the work by His apostles. “Tell us where is He that is born King, for we are come to worship!” are the words in which the wise men from the East desired to do earliest homage to the Child-King in the manger-cradle of Bethlehem. “Art Thou a King then?” are the words with which the representative of the Cæsars preluded that last scene which ended on the altar-throne of Calvary. The message which the herald of Christ was commissioned to proclaim, the



message with which Christ Himself opened His public ministry, was the advent of a kingdom. After His Resurrection He spoke with His disciples of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

What then is this kingdom? How shall we define it to ourselves?

The words in which it was first proclaimed seem to apply a Judaistic or Rabbinic origin. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand."

Yes, the kingdom was a Divine theocracy, as conceived by the Jewish prophets. But it was something more. The theocracy of Christendom is the Jewish idea expanded, enlarged, sublimated. It is the righteous Reign of God upon earth. It is the recognition of a divine righteousness in all the relations of life. It is human civilization regarded as the outcome of a Divine order, of a society in which the authority of a father, the obedience of a son is regarded as lying at the root of the universe. It is life itself, the whole of life, in every phase of its progressive activity, in all its realms of thought and action and feeling, subordinated to the law of a King, who is "Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that

fillet all in all." It is a present reality in which we may live to-day, if we please, if we are willing to rule our lives in subordination to its King, if as citizens we are willing, up to the measure of our powers, to embody its characteristic "notes." It is not "eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is a new social order, "it is the social incorporation of a spirit which penetrates and hallows every region of human activity, of a spirit which consecrates for the common service every variety of heritage and endowment, which combines in a harmonious union the manifold energies of enterprise, which crowns every faithful servant with a blessedness which none can take away or disturb."

When, therefore, we pray the Lord's Prayer aright, when we take this petition unto our lips, and say, as we do daily, "Thy kingdom come . . . in earth," we mean to say, May the religion of Christ as a sovereign society, as a power, as a loyalty, as a service, be a conquering, quickening, stimulating, controlling influence on all the realms of human thought and action, history, philosophy, ethics, law, politics, art, science; may that new order of society, which "by divers portions and in

divers manners," is gradually being worked out on the field of history, find at last its perfect fulfilment in that

" one far-off Divine event  
To which the whole creation moves."

It is true that in upholding such an interpretation of the Christian doctrine of the Lord's Prayer with regard to the constitution of society we shall meet with difficulties and objections. Such objections we must be ready to face. They will come chiefly from two opposite directions.

I. In the first place, we shall meet with those who think that such a doctrine is founded on a false interpretation of Scripture itself.

For example, I take up from my study table a pamphlet criticism of "Christian Socialism." I find on an early page such sentences as these—"Writers professing to be Christian Socialists naturally appeal to Holy Scripture. But their misuse of Scripture is lamentable . . . It is interesting to recall that Christ Himself expressly tells us that 'His kingdom is not of this world;' and that when one 'said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me, He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over

you ? . . . Take heed and beware of covetousness.' " And then there follows an argument something of this kind.

"Jesus Christ did not come in any sense as a social reformer, much less as a politician. 'His kingdom is not of this world.' He came to disengage men's souls from the cares of this world. He saw with perfect clearness that man's indifference to the only true life, the life of the spirit, his want of philosophy and morality, came almost entirely from the distractions of society, the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches. 'Beware of covetousness.' Christ proposed therefore to detach men from all these things, to break off his friendship with the world, which in reality meant enmity with God. He taught His disciples that to be wise or to be learned, or to be peaceful or to be happy, much more to be rich, was a snare and a peril to the true believer. Social reform, therefore, was no part of the Christian scheme of salvation. There is no Christian ideal for secular society, only for the individual. Distinctively Christian principles do not govern, and were never intended to govern, the corporate life of a community, a state, or a city, until all the individuals in that community were more or

less completely transformed by those principles. Business, for example, is business. It goes on with a steady, constant stream. Manufacturing, transporting, buying, selling, banking, have their inexorable necessities, and form a very large part of human life, regulated by inevitable economic laws, and it is not the part of Christianity to set aside those laws. Christianity must work on the Individual. It can only work on society in that way. It can alter the raw material out of which society is made. It cannot alter the mould in which it is cast. There is no political economy, no principles for the social order of to-day, in the Sermon on the Mount, or in the parables, or anywhere else in Christ's teaching. Such economic or sociological maxims as may seem to be there are entirely metaphysical, and to be interpreted of course in a merely spiritual sense. The disciple of Christ, as such, is to renounce the world, to lay up no treasure upon earth. Wealth is but a root of evil; elements of progress and civilization are of no moment. Secular happiness is altogether of secondary concern. What the true Christian has to do is to endeavour by patience and perseverance, by humility and repentance, by faith in the Redeemer, and through the efficacy of the



sacraments of the Church, to secure eternal happiness in Heaven. To copy Christ in resisting not evil, in giving to him that asketh, in abstaining from food, in adopting humility and poverty and simplicity, is not in order that we may live a more perfectly social, altruistic, neighbourly life here below, but in order that we may prepare our souls for a life of spiritual blessedness hereafter."

But what a foolish travesty of Christ's Gospel is this!

True, Christ did indeed say, "My kingdom is not of this world . . . is not from hence." But He certainly did not mean that His kingdom was to exist for certain objects which are to be marked off as spiritual, apart from the organization of human society which is to be regarded as profane. He certainly did not mean to say that His kingdom claimed no authority over this world, had nothing to do with it. Nor indeed did He say that. What He did say was that His kingdom was from above, that it had not an earthly origin, did not obtain its authority and strength from this world. So He had also said to His Jewish enemies—"Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world." And it was just because



Christ's kingdom was not from this world, not from beneath, but from above, that all the civil order in the world was to acknowledge Him as its Head.

The fact is, this theory of some natural separation of the Divine and secular provinces is the mere refuge of a narrow and indolent mind, it will not bear one moment's sincere and thorough thought.

So also of that other misinterpreted text about the disputed inheritance, or of the somewhat similar instance of the paying of the didrachma, or of the dilemma about the tribute money of Cæsar. Take the first instance. One man out of a multitude had said to Jesus, "Master, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." But Jesus was evidently angry at what He perceived to be the attempt of a covetous man to make use of Him. We may almost assume that the man had tried the ordinary law and had failed. At any rate Jesus indignantly repels the offensive attempt by intimating to the offender that he had come to the wrong quarter for the prosecution of a pecuniary loan. To infer, therefore, from Christ's indignant rebuff thus given to indecent covetousness, that loyalty to the civil order is not a loyalty "from above,"

directly from God, but from beneath, is not only unwarranted, it is almost exactly contrary to what Christ implies. And moreover, it must be remembered in the case before us, that had Christ listened to the probably *ex parte* statement of the plaintiff in this suit, reviewed his case, and given a judgment, He might have added a clause to the law of inheritance which the code of every Christian state throughout the ages would have been bound to embody, and which might have landed the lawyers of the future in endless perplexity. But this Christ resolutely refused to do. With a look and a word He lifted the whole question into an atmosphere where the possibly miserly spirit of one brother and the greediness of the other appeared equally contemptible. "Beware," He said, "of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Let a man understand that brotherhood and not wealth is the true basis of society, that if you would make society good you must first make men good, and that not what a man has got, but what a man is, is the important thing: then there will not be much difficulty left in settling mere questions of property and inheritance.

There is, moreover, another important principle with regard both to the method of Christ's teaching and also to the working of Christ's kingdom, indicated, I think, in this incident which it is appropriate to note here before we pass on.

The Sermon on the Mount, from one point of view, may be said to contain the new law of the Christian commonwealth. The great features of that commonwealth, the character and influence of its citizens, the inner principle of its legislation, are set forth in that document. And yet no one, I think, can study that Sermon carefully without perceiving that what Christ undertook to do for His society, was not to give it a code of legislation, where in section, sub-section, and schedule all ethical difficulties would be found codified and ticketed with their appropriate fines and punishments for all time, but to give to each member of His society, so far as it was possible, such an inspiration of loyalty to Himself as should give to that member a law-making power for himself. And Christ's own action was always in practice consistent with that method.

He found men living in a social system, under certain relations to one another. He did His best to alter those relations, to change

that evil social system. He believed it was possible to bring about a better state of things. He believed that He could make men regard one another as He Himself acted towards all mankind. He Himself lived in the eternal world, and acted towards men as citizens of a heavenly kingdom. He wished to change the social conditions and relations of the people, but He laid down no political rules, no constitutional devices for doing this. And why? Surely, because He knew that if there and then, at that time, in Palestine, He had promulgated a model government for that day, it would have stopped all progress, it would have stereotyped a particular national form, whereas He knew that all nations were different, would be different to the end of time. He knew that to do so would be to deny the laws of true life, to deny the deepest want of human nature, which needs effort and discipline, and choice and failure, in order that it may grow and flourish. But He laid down broad principles of righteousness and truth, and love and helpfulness, and He left His followers to work out the details for themselves.

And so His kingdom on earth, for which we daily pray in this petition, follows the order of true social life. The evolution

of society—the unfolding of God’s ruling—the coming of the kingdom, is therefore no sudden process. It is slow and gradual—gradual as the moving of the shadows—and as certain.

II. But let us turn to another aspect of our subject. I said there was a second direction from which difficulty in the way of belief might come.

How are we to hold an optimistic faith in the ideal kingdom of God, as the sanctification of the whole of human life in all its fullness, when we think of the history of man as the record of a divinely directed movement to a final goal of goodness? How is this petition of our Paternoster—“Thy Kingdom come in earth!”—affected by that *partus temporis*, that category of our age, the scientific hypothesis of evolution?

That theory, we all know, confronts us frigidly and firmly, with facts of existence, facts of history and human experience, from which as Christians we might perhaps wish to avert our eyes.

How, for example, does the Christian social ideal, does the Christian philosophy of civilization, look in face of such a verdict of the evolutionist as this? I quote from Mr. Balfour’s



*Foundations of Belief*, his description of the faith of a naturalist philosopher.

“Man, so far as natural science by itself is able to teach us, is no longer the final cause of the universe, the Heaven-descended heir of all the ages. His very existence is an accident, his story a brief and transitory episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets. Of the combination of causes which first converted a dead organic compound into the living progenitors of humanity, science indeed as yet knows nothing. It is enough that from such beginnings famine, disease, and mutual slaughter, fit nurses of the future lords of creation, have gradually evolved after infinite travail, a race with conscience enough to feel that it is vile, and intelligence enough to know that it is insignificant. We survey the past, and see that its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future, and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a mo-



ment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish.”<sup>1</sup>

Or again, let the naturalist philosopher speak in his own person. These are the words of Mr. Herbert Spencer : <sup>2</sup>

“There is no pleasure in the consciousness of being an infinitesimal bubble on a globe that is itself infinitesimal compared with the totality of things. Those on whom the un pitying rush of changes inflicts sufferings, which are often without remedy, find no consolation in the thought that they are at the mercy of blind forces, which cause, indifferently, now the destruction of a sun, and now the death of an animalcule.”

In my sermon last term on the previous clause of this prayer, I quoted a sentence from the Romanes Lecture of Huxley, in which that able writer spoke of the cosmic process of evolution as having no sort of relation to moral ends, being, in fact, “no school of virtue, but the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature.”

Let me quote to-day a passage from that same writer of a more concrete type.

“Any one,” he says, in his well-known criticism of the methods and work of the

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations of Belief*, pp. 30, 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Fortnightly Review*, June 1895.

Salvation Army, "any one who is acquainted with the state of the population of all great industrial centres, whether in this or other countries, is aware that, amidst a large and increasing body of that population, *la misère* reigns supreme. I have no pretensions to the character of a philanthropist, and I have a special horror of all sorts of sentimental rhetoric; I am merely trying to deal with facts, to some extent within my own knowledge, and further evidenced by abundant testimony as a naturalist; and I take it to be a mere plain truth, that throughout industrial Europe there is not a single large manufacturing city which is free from a vast mass of people whose condition is exactly that described, and from a still greater mass who, living just on the edge of the social swamp, are liable to be precipitated into it, by any lack of demand for their produce. . . . What profits it," he asks, "to the human Prometheus that he has stolen the fire of Heaven to be his servant, and that the spirits of the earth and the air obey him, if the vulture of pauperism is eternally to tear his very vitals, and keep him on the brink of destruction?"

What, then, we ask, in face of such scientific objections as these, based on un-

doubted facts of existence, should be our attitude?

In the first place, I think, as Christians, as men who believe that there is a Christian philosophy of civilization, we should boldly assert our right to have for ourselves no theory of ethics, of conduct, no science of society which affects to be independent of our religious creed. That is surely a very natural demand, but it is one which the Christian student of ethics has not always made upon his rivals or opponents. Apparently he has too often acted as if he thought his only chance of winning consideration in the field of ethics was to occupy no ground which was not also common to those students of morals and society to whom deductions from Christian revelation would be regarded as obsolete. This action seems to me as mistaken as it is timid. On the contrary, we ought always to start without any hesitation from our Christian Creed.

We ought to begin our testimony, as Christ our Master began His, with the plain statement—"our kingdom though *in* this world is not *of* it." In our view, whatever he may be to others, man is a spiritual being. The organism of human society belongs by its essence to an invisible world. Its structure

is only explained by its relations with that unseen world. Looking back upon history, we assert that the social evolution, of which science claims to trace the method and purpose, exhibits also the working out of a spiritual purpose and discipline for humanity. In that history we think we have warrant for a belief in an ideal social state, conjectured as being perfected in the future, natural, and to be naturally evolved, and we think that that ideal is not merely created by our own imaginations, but has been revealed as part of the original design of our Creator. We regard human life, in fact, as a great educational problem, working itself out according to the plan of God; and that in the progressive realization of the Divine idea of human perfectibility there is laid upon man a twofold obligation. We believe, therefore, that for each of us there is a social as well as a personal duty. We believe in personal duty requiring that we should each daily strive to render our individual lives more worthy of that filial relationship with our heavenly Father which our Master came to reveal. But we believe also in social duty, requiring that we should be strenuous in that "fellow work with God" by which, according to His purpose, the

collective life of man is gradually being fashioned after the image of the kingdom of Heaven. We believe, therefore, in the duty of man to study the providential laws by which humanity has been impelled along the path of social order and progress, and to co-operate as far as he can with those laws in order that in human society this double manifestation of progress may be seen—all men approximating to a common level, but a level which is continually rising.

But believing all this, the Christian student of civilization is not in the least concerned to deny any of the verified conclusions of the science of evolution. Rather he will welcome with admiration and thankfulness all that it may truly discover, as so much revelation of the creative methods of the Divine Father whom he worships. Nay, he may perhaps be obliged to go further. He may find it necessary even, in deference to the just claims of modern science and the new terms of modern thought, to re-state for the present age the dogmas of his faith, to readjust its doctrines, to refocus its truth. But one thing he will not do. He will not give up his faith in the Divine fatherhood of God, and the filial relationship of man as the true basis of social order, or his belief in a



good God, controlling all the forces of evolution, as the true source of social progress. Whatever Nature may, therefore, appear to be to the scientific evolutionist, to the Christian evolutionist it must ever remain precious as the sphere in which a Divine life is manifested, as the object on which a Divine love is lavished. If Mr. Huxley was right when he told us that "cosmic force has no sort of relation to moral ends," then as Christians we shall call in ethical force to redress the balance, and we shall say that that theory of evolution is incomplete which claims to estimate the influence of the cosmic process on man in society, and fails to give its due weight to the ethical. Yes, indeed, for us Christians we shall demand a wider and a nobler conception of evolution as the way in which God makes things to come to pass, a conception in which, though the prehistoric triumphs of cosmic nature, the fierce struggle for existence, the ceaseless conflict—"Nature red in tooth and claw with ravin"—cannot be forgotten (shall we ever forget the mystery of evil until perhaps "behind the veil" we learn its secret?), yet also a conception in which what we shall most care to remember will be the greater and still more marvellous triumphs



of the ethical process of evolution, not the miracles, by which out of fierce despotism has come forth liberty, out of slavery freedom, out of selfishness self-sacrifice, out of might right, out of fear reverence, out of lust love, out of the conflicts of self-interest, morality and virtue ; ah, no ! but rather the marvellous triumphs of the grace of God in the human heart, by which out of suffering has come moral strength and nobility of character, out of the mystery of pain have grown the marvels of spiritual victory, out of the fires of trial has been won the purity of the soul, out of failure borne nobly in the present has been gained for us hereafter a far more exceeding weight of glory, out of martyrdom has grown moral supremacy.

This, my friends, is the faith of the Christian evolutionist, the only faith, as I believe, which will give us a safe assurance that the social optimist, the visionary, the dreamer is not also the fanatic, the anarchist, the revolutionary, a safe assurance that the hope which seems to be leading mankind onwards is other than an empty illusion, “ a marsh fire which is leading astray rather than a star which guides ; ” a safe assurance that any social reform which man undertakes is not a desperate adventure

creating more problems than it can ever solve.

Such a faith, believe me, is, as Mr. Balfour once said, "no ray of metaphysics floating in the sunshine of sentimentalism," for it rests on a positive basis, which only becomes broader and firmer with the widening of human experience. The man of religious imagination, the man to whom his religion, whatever else it may be, expresses his feeling about the highest forces that govern human destiny, who in observing the long processes of time, and appreciating the slowly accumulating sum of human endeavour, is able, in the words of Browning's *Paracelsus*,

"To trace love's first beginnings in mankind,  
To know even hate is but a mask of love ;  
To see a good in evil, and a hope  
In ill-success ; to sympathize, be proud  
Of man's half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim  
Struggles for truth, his poorest fallacies,  
His prejudices, fears and cares and doubts,  
Which all touch upon nobleness, despite  
Their error, all tend upwardly though weak ;  
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,  
But dream of him and guess where he may be,  
And do their best to climb and get to him."

The man, I say, whose religion has thus taught him, by what sublime struggles generation after generation of his brethren have added

some small piece to the temple of human freedom, or some new impulse to the cause of human progress, or some fresh ideal to the types of beautiful or strong human character, will not only be able to say with Paracelsus—

“ If I stoop  
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud  
It is but for a time : I press God’s lamp  
Close to my breast ; its splendour soon or late  
Will pierce the gloom : I shall emerge one day : ”—

but will also have gained a conception of life and eternity, of duty and of destiny, prompting him to abundant moods of worship and reverence, of deep-seated gratitude, and of sovereign love ; and no less inspiring him to fulfil, with new hope and invigorated endeavour, all the traditions of beneficent work and strenuous service, to consecrate with joyful energies all his powers to the pursuit of a visible common good, which honour must always demand from any Christian disciple who dares to take daily upon his lips the prayer of his Lord—“ Thy kingdom come . . . . in earth.”

### III

#### SOCIAL JUSTICE

St. Matt. vi. 11: "Give us this day our daily bread."

A PITHY and a pointed comment on this petition of the Lord's Prayer is that of Bishop Isaac Barrow. He said—"A noble heart will disdain to subsist like a drone on the honey gained by others' labour; or like vermin to filch its food from the public granary; or like a shark to prey on the lesser fry; but will one way or other earn his subsistence, for he that doth not earn can hardly be said to own his daily bread."

The good bishop, I think, was right. For although of the seven petitions of the prayer—three for God's glory, three for our own souls, one for our bodies—one only is for earthly need, yet that one can be no purely selfish, egoistic prayer, for when we pray

this petition as we ought to pray it, "Our Father, give us day by day our daily bread," we pray surely even in that one word that we may live lives of honest industry and noble aim and social service; we acknowledge even in that one word that our daily bread is a gift, a gift from God, and that therefore the trade or profession or calling by which we get it, is something about which, in its daily transactions, we are not ashamed to pray to God; we mean, or ought to mean, that as our Master rejected the tempter's offer, "Command that these stones be made bread," so we are prepared to reject that offer; we mean that we ask for God's bread, the bread that comes in the slow natural way of honest toil and happy industry and fellow work, and that we reject the devil's bread, that would seem to come by some quick magic or gambler's luck, or false work, or plausible trade trickery; we mean that we ask for God's bread, not the devil's bread, an honest worker's bread, not a thieving swindler's bread, bread which carries with it no curse upon ourselves or others, but bread upon which we dare to ask God's blessing for ourselves and for our children.

It is at any rate from that point of view

that I am proposing to ask you to consider this petition to-day.

Social justice as the basic principle of all true economics, *that* is my subject.

We are all familiar, no doubt, with the interminable discussion as to the exact meaning of the Greek word—ἐπιούσιος—used in this petition for the first and only time in Holy Scripture, and nowhere else in all Greek literature, and with the various English renderings of the word, according as one or other derivation of it is accepted—as by both the Authorised and Revised Version, “Give us this day our *daily* bread,” or as in the margin of the Revised Version, “bread for the coming day give to us,” or as by others—“our bread continual of the day give to us”—“our sufficient bread,” “our convenient bread,” “the bread of our portion,” “the bread for our essential life, for our eternal, spiritual life give to us,” or in a more sacramentarian and mystic sense, “our consubstantial or super-substantial bread,” following the interpretation of the African Fathers, and the implication of St. Jerome, who, in his revision of the old Latin text, substituted *supersubstantialem* for *quotidianum* in St. Matthew's version of the prayer, a substitution which at a later



time, when knowledge of the Greek tongue died out, led to many a bitter debate in the Western Church, as in the celebrated controversy of Abelard with St. Bernard. We are familiar too with the conjecture, founded on the variation in the two Gospels of the text of the closing phrase of the petition—*σήμερον* or *καθ' ἡμέραν*, “this day” or “day by day”—which suggests that St. Matthew may be giving the common formula for Morning Prayer, while St. Luke gives that used at Evening, or at any hour of the day for the oncoming space of time that is left, and with the further surmise, leading to the two contradictory interpretations, on the one hand that our Lord is adopting the common habit of the most pious of the Rabbis, not to pray for the things of the morrow—“give us the bread of to-day in its day”—and on the other that He is suggesting the true form of prayer for the future, for a succession of morrows—“Provide to-morrow’s bread, and give it us to-day, lest we be solicitous for to-morrow.”

And whether we have been puzzled, as St. Chrysostom was before us, with all these variations of the text and its interpretation, or whether more happy, like the old Jewish Rabbi, Jacob of Serug, who, caring little for

philology as such, was intent only to find new meanings in the Word through each fresh derivation of it, we are satisfied to combine the religious lessons thus deducible from all the various readings, matters perhaps hardly at all to us to-day.

But there *is* one less obvious allusion to be found in the form of this petition, which I think we may find suggestive of practical teaching and useful for our purpose. I mean the allusion to the teaching of the nature-parable of the manna gatherers, as recorded in the old Jewish history, and as interpreted in the Rabbinic writings, and as finding an echo in the teaching of St. Paul in his second letter to the Corinthian Church.

It was sufficiently probable, *à priori*, that the Lord's Prayer should contain some reference to the giving of the manna. For indeed all through the Rabbinic writings we find prayer and thanksgiving closely associated with the memory of the miracle of the manna, of the heavenly bread, descending on the earth like dew from above. As in the Book of Wisdom, we read of how "God gave to His people angels' food to eat . . . bread having the virtue of every pleasant savour . . . tempering itself according to every man's choice . . . and

yet when simply warmed by a faint sunbeam melting away, that it might be known that men must rise before the sun to give God thanks, and must plead with Him at the dawning of the light." So over and over again in the sayings of the Fathers, the bread from heaven, the manna, is described as bread of wisdom, food for body, soul and spirit, agreeable to every taste; and over and over again the guiding principles of God's good providence and of man's dependence on the Almighty Father's care are deduced from the method of its provision and distribution. One can hardly miss, for example, the analogy between the "day by day" of the Lord's Prayer, and the certain rate for every day, a day's portion in its day, and a day's portion only, in the provision of the manna, or doubt that such a comment as that of Rabbi El ha Modai would seem to the disciples quite in the spirit of their Master's prayer—"Who-soever has what to eat to-day, and says 'What shall I eat to-morrow?' lo, such an one is wanting in faith."

I think, however, perhaps the most interesting allusion in the New Testament to this old nature-parable is that of St. Paul in the passage in his second letter to the Corinthian

Church, in which he lays down the principles of true almsgiving, the principles of true Christian Socialism, shall we rather say, to be observed in face of the difficulties of the problem of poverty and wealth as he knew it at the beginning of the Christian era in Greece and the Greek colonies of Syria. It is to be found in the eighth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. It is the same chapter, you will remember, in which occur those words that in their issue gave rise to the movement of Saint Francis of Assisi, and the establishment of the mendicant Orders in Europe, and for so many years furnished almost the central question of theological controversy—"For your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."

The deep poverty—*ἡ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεια*—of the Churches of Macedonia, and the necessity of the Jewish Christian poor in Syria, were both probably traceable to the same cause, the long series of miseries which, in the case of either province, had succeeded and accompanied its conquest by the Romans. St. Paul of course has to deal with but a very small portion of the whole problem. He has to consider it in a purely local form—how best

to make the liberality of one little circle of his followers at one place and time, minister to the poverty of the saints at another, and yet be so managed that justice shall not be sacrificed to generosity, that the end shall be proportioned to the means.

The apostolic decision is an excellent illustration of St. Paul's "sanctified common sense."

"Let your generosity," he says, "be proportioned to your means. This must be so always. Your generous zeal, it is true, proves your Christian sense of brotherhood, of comradeship, your love to men for Christ's sake. You are acting to them as He acted to you, when on your behalf He exchanged riches and poverty. But I have no wish that you should be too heavily pressed for the relief of others. There must be reciprocity among Christians, a fair equality of service, mutual co-operation and assistance. If you help now, they must be ready to respond hereafter if need come, so that in any present deed of liberality, or in any future redistribution of wealth, the saying of the old Scripture about the nature-parable of the manna gatherers may be fulfilled—'much was not too much, and little was not too little,' that



there may be equality, as it is written, 'he that had much had nothing over, and he that had little had no lack.'"

Have we not here, as I said, the true principles of Christian Socialism, the germinal idea at least of true economics, from which the whole duty of man in relation to his industrial life may be evolved, and the production of wealth and its distribution be brought into due moral subordination to the wider and nobler aims of his intellectual, spiritual and social life?

At any rate, if we place this summary of the Apostle's appeal to the Church of Corinth in relation to the industrial problem of his day, in the light of the essential principle of social justice, which Bishop Barrow thought he had found imbedded in this petition of the Lord's Prayer, we shall find ourselves, I think, in possession of ethical principles quite sufficient to solve, if only Christians would be Christians, not only the comparatively simple problem of poverty as it existed in the little Grecian seaport in the first century, but as it exists to-day in England in regard to the more tremendous modern problem of capital and labour in some great Christian city.

Let me endeavour to set out some of those



principles in definite proportions, that you may judge how far they can be legitimately read, one by one, into the terms of this petition of the Lord's Prayer.

I. *The principle of social justice.*—The loss of one cannot on the whole be the gain of another in the unity of the Christian life. God is no respecter of persons. Inequalities, indeed, of every kind are interwoven with the whole providential order of human life, and are recognized emphatically by Jesus Christ. But the Christian social order cannot ignore the interests of any of its parts, and must, moreover, be tested by the degree in which it secures for each one of its members freedom for happy, useful, untrammelled life, and distributes as widely and equitably as may be social advantages and opportunities. A system of industry under which one man may acquire in a lifetime—to quote a quaint American figure—as much money as Adam would have laid by out of his earnings if he had lived to our time and saved one hundred dollars a day, cannot be a perfected system of human brotherhood. “The much must not be too much, and the little not too little.” In a Christian state every citizen ought to have a subsistence before any one has super-

fluity. Luxury can only justifiably come into existence when honest penury has vanished, for luxury only then ceases to be culpable when it serves to make a man a more useful, a more loving, a more helpful member of the community. "Luxury can only be enjoyed"—it was an old saying of Mr. Ruskin—"by the ignorant; the cruelest man living could not sit at his feast unless he sat blindfold."

"Our Father which art in Heaven, . . . give us this day our daily bread!" Give me, O my Father, on this new day of Thine, bread sufficient for my need, and teach me to seek it always as a gift from Thee, not only that I may eat it so in gladness and singleness of heart, but that I may thus be saved from the feverish desire to heap up riches for myself. And because my true life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which I possess, save me from the spirit of the rich fool, that I may be tempted to injure none, to defraud none, to keep back their due from none. Teach me to accept the lesson of the old Greek ascetics, that a man is rich and poor not in his household goods but in his soul. Give me daily bread, the strong wholesome food of character, that I may give myself to the cause of social progress, to the increase of human

power over circumstance, to the growth of humanizing wants, to the raising of the standard of life, to the enlargement, the enrichment, the ennoblement of human joy.

And to pray this petition in that spirit is surely to pray the Lord's Prayer aright.

II. *The principle of social service.*—"He that doth not earn his daily bread," said Bishop Barrow, "can hardly be said to own it;" in other words, this principle declares that every man is bound to service; the wilfully idle man, and the man who lives only for himself, have no place in a Christian community; that all service is honourable and all idleness a disgrace; that no wealth is legitimately earned which is not an exchange value for actual services rendered, services which minister to life and help on the common good; that to get money by whatever strategy, by the gambling method, whether of Turf or Stock Exchange, without furnishing an equivalent, is dishonourable spoliation; that private property exists for the sake of society, not society for the sake of private property; that wealth is a trust, and that men are to be measured not by what they possess, but by the use they make of their possessions; that wealth does not release its possessor from

the obligation to work, but only enables him to do what appears to be unpaid work for society, the only difference ethically between the rich man and the poor man seeming to be this, that the poor man receives his wages at the end of the week, and does not get them unless his work is first done, whereas the wealthy man receives his wages first and is bound in honour to earn them afterwards ; that things are for men, and not men for things ; that any industrial system which grinds up men and women to make cheap goods is an un-Christian system ; that no industrial system can be a Christian system until it is so organized that every honest and willing worker can find work, and work so remunerative that not only can he maintain his own working powers in health and efficiency, but also is able to give to his children a decent, a joyous, and a reasonable life according to the standard of comfort of his class.

“ Our Father which art in Heaven . . . give us this day our daily bread.”

In the breaking of my daily bread, grant me, O Lord, to know Thy presence, and in return for Thy gift, and as my bounden duty and service, may I offer to Thee the reasonable and holy sacrifice of my daily life and work.

I am Thy workman, O Christ, and all that I do is Thine. Prosper Thou the work of my hand upon me, oh, prosper 'Thou my handiwork; make it sound, and good, and honest, worthy of Thy blessing; may it never be half work done for whole pay, or sham work palmed off as true. And as my daily bread is a gift from Thee, a holy gift for Thy service, may I ever be strong to reject the tempter's offer to turn stones into bread, to win success in life by base means, by the thieves' way, by taking advantage of the weakness or ignorance of my neighbour, and rendering him no equivalent in reciprocal service. May I never eat thieves' bread, bread which I have stolen, not earned, lest, like the manna of old, it stink in my nostrils and become an abomination and a loathing. Fix firm my character and life in integrity and fearless truth. Quicken in me the higher life of social duty. And as the bread I eat passes into my veins, and under the spell of bodily life becomes myself, and as my life-blood builds up my frame, and by my actions done in that strength passes out into God's world, and still is myself in all I do, so may the living Bread from Heaven, the Life of Christ, in answer to this my daily prayer, pass into my spirit and become myself, and as



a life-spirit build up an unseen frame of living strength to be offered as a Eucharist to God, and by my actions done in that strength pass out into God's world as a quickening spirit, giving life and strength to others, inspiring others to strive for simplicity in the personal life, for luxury only in the sharing of common joys, helping on, if it may be, in however small a degree, the coming of that new fellowship of humanity, that new order of society, founded on industrial peace and forethought, which shall one day put hope and pleasure in the place of fear and pain, as the forces which move men to labour and keep the world a-going.

And to pray this petition in that spirit is surely to pray the Lord's Prayer aright.

III. *The principle of social responsibility.*—It was a fine saying of Frederick Maurice, that "no man can say sincerely, 'Our brothers who are on earth,' who has not first learnt to say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven.'" But that principle of fraternity, founded on Christ's revelation of the filial relationship of man to God, implies that in the Christian's daily duty of setting up the kingdom of God upon earth, the society not the individual must be the first centre of thought, that social duty must



always take precedence of private right ; that though there will always be variety of function, distinction of office, in the one body of which every true Christian is a member, there need never be, there ought not even to be confusion of responsibility in multiplicity of service ; that while character, individual character, in the Christian citizen is the first of social needs, it must never be forgotten that individual character is influenced at every point by social environment, and that therefore in a Christian order of society the Christian community as a whole is morally responsible for the character of that order, for the conditions of the social environment ; that a corporate conscience, an active enlightened public opinion must have authority in a Christian community to decide to what extent matters affecting social order shall be left to individual initiative, to the unregulated play of material forces, industrial, economic, or shall be brought under direct administrative control ; that such a public conscience, awakened and active, will best secure the right administration of our existing social system, or such a modification or change of it as seems to be demanded by the progress of knowledge, thought and life.

Once again then, as in the thought of this

principle of social responsibility, I take this petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven . . . give us this day our daily bread," upon my lips, what shall be my own personal prayer? Shall it not be this, or something like this?

Oh, my Father, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named, may my prayer for daily bread pass upward, and be transfigured, and become a prayer for that Bread from heaven which is Christ Himself, broken for humanity and given evermore for the life of the world. Thou who hast knit together thy children in one communion and fellowship in that mystical Body, and hast made us all partakers of that one Bread, members of that one Body, grant to me the spirit of that Body, help me to carry that spirit not only into all the daily transactions of my own secular calling, but also, as far as my personal influence extends, to create and strengthen such an enlightened and active public opinion, in regard to all social and industrial problems, as shall tend to promote a more active spirit of social service as a part of Christian duty, as shall tend to permeate economic and industrial life with the regulative spirit of applied Christianity; and that the Passion of Thy Son

may be verified, and the law of His Incarnation—from men to men—may be utilized, help me to fulfil more consistently my membership in the Church, as the storehouse of Christ's redemptive manhood, as the witnessing body to the all-sufficiency of His Divine and incarnate grace to solve all the problems of human society, to the transforming, enlightening, quickening power of His Holy Spirit upon all human character and life.

And to pray this petition in that spirit would be surely to pray the Lord's Prayer aright.

But to pray in that spirit would be to work in that spirit also, for, as Lord Tennyson said in his last poem—

“To pray, to do :

To pray, to do according to the prayer,  
Are both to worship Allah : but the prayers  
That have no successor in deed are faint  
And pale in Allah's eyes ; fair mothers they  
Dying in childbirth of dead sons.”

And to pray this petition aright is to recognize that the special call of Christ to the present age is a call to Social Service, it would be to acknowledge that the Mission of Christ's Church in this closing year of the century, whatever else it may be, and it is of course much else, is a Social Mission.

And if you ask me—and I am speaking now of course to the junior members of the University—how, as individuals, you shall obey Christ's call, you shall help to fulfil this mission, I will say to you:—

1. In the first place, while you are in this University, study these industrial and social problems carefully and scientifically in your economic text-books, and with the methods you learn in your economic class-rooms, but study them also in the light of the Law of the Incarnation—that God's way out to men is from men to men—and you will come to see, I doubt not, that in all economic problems, in the last resort, the question is not about wealth, but about men ; and you will begin to wonder whether after all human nature is so changed or sunk, that spiritual forces may not once more outdo the miracles of chemistry and mechanics, or forethought and faith prove themselves even stronger than electricity and gas in moulding the social destinies of man.

2. And then, when you go out from this place of learning, "furnished completely unto every good work," be determined that you will carry with you into the daily practice of life, not only your science and your learning, but your faith. If you are an employer of labour,

take care in the first place—my own parochial experience leads me to say in the first place—take care that your Christian philanthropy grows naturally out of the management of your own business, that is to say, if you are a ship-owner, see that your first efforts at social service, social reform, are on behalf of your own seamen; if a coal-owner or iron-master, on behalf of your own miners; if a cotton-spinner, on behalf of your own factory hands; if a cotton-broker or merchant, on behalf of your own clerks, or porters, or labourers. Look to the lives of your own workmen first of all. Let your name by all means appear as frequently as it ought in the subscription lists of the great public charities of your city or neighbourhood, but do not leave it for the revelations connected, say, with your candidature of some contested city election, to discover that your charity has not begun at home, in kindly human relationship, direct and personal, with your own work-people. Care, I say, first of all, for the lives of the men in your own employment. And when sometimes, perhaps on Sunday in church, you hear the words telling how Christ came that men “might have life, and have it more abundantly,” and you consider that for yourself, no less than for



your men, life means something more than livelihood, means joy, means art, means comradeship, do not forget that for your men, even more than for yourself, life does mean livelihood, that where livelihood is not adequate, life not only begins—as to the last of time with most men it must begin—in livelihood, but that it ends there. And if such thoughts of the true meaning of the adequacy of both life and livelihood, of wealth and well-being, should lead you to consider also St. Paul's doctrine about "the labourer who worketh being first partaker of the fruits," and to wonder whether, after all, in a right system of economics, it may not be true that the living wage should be the bed-rock of price, the first charge on the product of work, and whether therefore, in a Christian system of trade, some way ought not to be found for prices to follow wages, rather than wages prices, I should not, if I were you, greatly care if men call you Socialist, for it is not, remember, the Socialism which comes to a rich man because he is a Christian that is dangerous; it is the Socialism which comes to a poor man because other people have ceased to be Christians which is dangerous.

3. Again, if it should happen—as in this



congregation it well may happen—that your lives in the future shall be cast, not amid the great cities of England, but among the country villages, then I say that upon you and upon such as you very largely lies the responsibility for the future happiness and stability of your country. For no one, I am sure, can have thought seriously upon social questions without feeling that the true key to the solution of the city problem lies in the village. You must have often heard how one of the great difficulties in connection with the surplus of the workers in the town arises from the steady influx of the rural labourer, attracted not only by the larger wages, but by the larger life of the city. The problem for you, as a possible country squire in the future, to solve is how to make English village life more attractive, village citizenship more honourable, how to break the monotony and commonplace with some stimulant which shall not be vicious, with some pleasure which shall not be merely gross and sensual, how to quicken citizenship and local patriotism with noble aims of goodness and wholesomeness and righteousness. And believe me, you will find no better way of doing that than by making evident in your leadership, your own personal faith in the

royalty of Christ and the ultimate authority of His law in the realm of village ethics, village economics, village politics. For most certainly it is that Faith which will best create in the citizen that true sense of individual responsibility, strengthening him to resist the tyranny of village tradition and prejudice, habituating him to live for an unseen and distant end, which is so necessary both in city and village, to counterwork that impatience for quick results and legislative short cuts which is always one of the great dangers of a democratic electorate.

4. And if some of you are called to be country parsons, as others are called to be country squires, to them I would say, if I may pass on the advice that was once given to a country parson by one of the noblest country gentlemen of our generation, who was himself I think quoting Charles Kingsley —“Above all do not let your people discover where the man leaves off and the parson begins.” And that advice I take it means, not that you are to distinguish between the secular and the spiritual, in order that you may make the parson as much secular as possible, but that you are to recognize in your practice and in your teaching that Life is one

and that man is one. That Life is one—that you have no right to say to your people social life, industrial life, civic life is one thing, and spiritual life, religious life, quite another; and Man is one—you cannot dismember his soul, and divide it in halves, and so contrive that part of it shall be kept for secular work and part for religious work, that one half shall be used when he is buying and selling on a week-day, and the other half when he is praying and singing on a Sunday.

Least of all must the country parson cease to believe in the wholeness, in the unity of Life. In the new democratic future, whether in the English city or the English village, the call is for leadership, and for leaders, who, while believing in the possibilities of democratic control, know how essential to efficient administration are all the qualities which go to make up the ideal Christian character—justice, patience, hopefulness, modesty, integrity, frankness, fellowship.

We need clergy, therefore, who will insist that it is the duty of the Church, as an interpreter of life, as a preacher of Christ's kingdom on earth, so to act, so to speak, that every citizen shall feel that it is a point of honour

and of Christian obligation to build up, as far as his influence extends, the life of the civic brotherhood to which he belongs, and every sphere of action which it contains, in justice, righteousness, and the fear of God.

And yet, while I most earnestly counsel those of you who may be country parsons in the future not to separate yourselves from the civic life and the social enthusiasms, perhaps even the political ideals of your parishioners, I do counsel you most earnestly to beware of the danger of secularizing your office. It is, I fear, in these days a very real danger, especially to the younger clergy, partly from the always powerful spirit of worldliness, and partly also as a reaction against a somewhat seminarist type of priestliness, which seems to be growing up amongst us.

There is a story told of the old Scotch Presbyterian divine, Dr. Leighton, that on one occasion he was publicly reprimanded by his synod for not "preaching for the times." He inquired from them who was in the habit of doing so? "All the brethren," they replied. "Then," he said, "if all of you preach for the times, you may surely allow one poor brother to preach for Christ and eternity."

My friends, I know not whether the story

is true or not. But the lesson of it for us seems to be true, and it is this. The Church demands from every one of her ministers that he should "preach for the times," but only on the condition that the preacher himself has first striven to bring his own life, every day and every hour of it, into the presence of Christ and under the light of His eternity, and for the rest has learnt to feel—

"That God and Heaven's great deeps are nearer  
Him to whose heart his fellow-man is nigh ;  
Who does not hold his soul's own freedom dearer  
Than that of all his brethren low or high ;  
Who to the right can feel himself the truer  
For being gently patient with the wrong ;  
Who sees a brother in the evil-doer,  
And finds in love the heart's blood of his song."

## IV

### SOCIAL DUTY

St. Matt. vi. 12, 13: "Our Father . . . forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

"ORATIO Dominica," says St. Augustine, "forma est desideriorum." The Paternoster is the mould of prayer into which we are to cast all our needs. There is no necessity to go beyond it, for it is normal for all other prayers. There is not, he affirms, any possible request that a faithful man ought to make, which cannot be brought under one or other clause of this prayer, which is not an unfolding of something which is shut up in it. It is only such a prayer as ought never to be prayed, something that "we ask amiss," which will not range itself under one or other of its petitions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Nihil invenies quod in istâ Dominicâ non contineatur et concludatur oratione."—*Ep.* cxxx. 12.



In the three sermons which, at intervals during my term of office, it has been my privilege to preach in this place, I have endeavoured to apply St. Augustine's principle of exegesis. I have asked you, on the one hand, to find shut up, as it were, in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, certain principles of social action which seemed to me to characterize God's good government of the world; and, on the other hand, I have asked you to appraise the value of certain of our own social hopes and aspirations in regard to the future of humanity by seeing how far they will bear the test of being prayed, of being cast into the mould of the Lord's Prayer. Social order, social progress, social justice—these have been the subjects of our thought hitherto.

In my first sermon I spoke of the principle of Social Order.

The Fatherly will of God as the only true basis of human society, as the only ground for a rational faith that social evolution is true; that evolution is the way that God makes things come to pass; that the history of humanity has a definite moral goal; that there is no place in God's plan for the world for any permanent force which is out of sympathy

with human progress ; that the Christian doctrine of the inherent dignity of "the soul" of man gave birth to the idea of personality, and personality involving freedom ; that individual freedom upon which personal and social responsibility can alone rest, is further guaranteed by the conception of a fatherly Creator ; that there is therefore a fixed objective point towards which society is being guided by God, and a consequent prescribed duty for society to fulfil—in other words, that there is an order of society which is the best, and that towards this order man is gradually being led according to a definite Divine plan—all this we thought we found implied in the first clauses of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father which art in Heaven, Thy will be done, as in Heaven, so in earth."

In my second sermon I dwelt upon the principle of Social Progress. That the idea of the kingdom of God gives birth to Social Optimism ; that the belief in the Reign of Christ here and now is the source of every true Christian's militant certitude, for which history too he thinks gives warrant, of the ultimate establishment upon earth of an ideal social state, natural and to be naturally evolved ; that human life is therefore rightly

regarded as a great educational plan working itself out according to the design of God ; that in the progressive realization of the Divine idea of human perfectibility a conception of social duty as well as of personal duty is evolved, in other words, that society exists quite as much to create new duties as to insure old rights ; that in the fulfilment of this twofold obligation, personal and social, it is man's duty to study the providential laws by which humanity has been impelled along the path of social order and progress, and to co-operate, as far as he can, with those laws, in order that in human society this double manifestation of progress may be seen—all men approximating to a common level, but a level which is continually rising—all this we thought we found revealed or implied in the second clause of the Paternoster, "Father . . Thy kingdom come . . . in earth."

In my third sermon, on the first Sunday of this term, I spoke of Social Justice.

And in that petition of the prayer in which we pray that "our daily Bread may be given to us day by day," I thought we found, in the fact that the daily bread is stated to be a gift from God, God's bread, not devil's bread, bread therefore to be legitimately earned

before it can be said to be honestly owned, the social principle implied that all service is honourable and all idleness a disgrace; that no wealth is legitimately earned which is not an exchange value for actual services rendered, services which minister to life and help on the common good; that to get money by whatever strategy, by the gambling method of Turf or Stock Exchange, without furnishing an equivalent, is dishonourable spoliation; that private property exists for the sake of society, not society for the sake of private property; that wealth is a trust, and that men are to be measured not by what they possess, but by the use they make of their possessions; that luxury can only justifiably come into existence when honest penury has vanished, for luxury only then ceases to be culpable when it serves to make a man a more careful, a more loving, a more helpful member of the community; that life means more than livelihood; that things are for men and not men for things; that any industrial system which grinds up men and women to make cheap goods is an un-Christian system; that no industrial system can be a Christian system which is not so organized that every honest and willing worker can find work, and work so remunerative that

not only can he maintain his own working powers in health and efficiency, but also is able to give to his children a decent, a joyous, and a reasonable life according to the standard of comfort of his class.

To-day we come to the last clauses of the Prayer:—

“Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

What is the social message of these words?

“Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us:” so at least runs the clause in the familiar words of the Prayer-Book version—the version adopted, I fancy, by all English Christians, Nonconformist as well as Churchmen. But, as you are well aware, the words do not run so either in the Authorised or the Revised Version of St. Matthew or St. Luke. “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors,” are St. Matthew’s words. “Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us,” are St. Luke’s.

There are special lessons no doubt—there always are—to be learnt from a careful exegesis of the varying words used in translation of the Greek equivalents for “sin,”



"debt," "trespass," but a consideration of the Syriac texts, both old and Vulgate, as representing most nearly the original Aramaic, seems to leave little doubt that in St. Matthew's word translated "debt" we have the most accurate reproduction of the original.

There is certainly no need, for our special purpose to-day, to go beyond that word. There could not well be a better text for a sermon on Social Duty than this petition, "Forgive us our debts." "Debt" and "duty," moreover, are practically the same word, being but Middle-English variants of the Latin "*debita*," a sum which is due, a duty, a debt.

This petition then of the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts," we may quite fairly for our purpose to-day translate—"Forgive us, O God, our failures in social duty!"

Social duty—ah! my friends, when in the light of Christ's Incarnation we bring ourselves face to face with the great social problems of our age and country, does not this petition of the Lord's Prayer—so read—touch our consciences? When, on the one hand, we consider the ideals of the Church of Christ, "the splendid having and royal hope," the zeal for souls, the sympathy for bodily needs, which are the undivided fruits of a single love, exhibited



in the one blessed life of Jesus, to be reflected in His Church, as witnessing for Him, as representing Him in this present world, as occupied with His work of setting up the kingdom of God under and amidst the natural every-day conditions of human life; and on the other, when we consider the Babel life of our great cities, that black cloud of pauperism brooding over the richest of the countries of the earth, of drunkenness, with all its foul brood of folly and sensuality and crime, of social revolt, of the almost standing feud between capital and labour, of endemic misery and avoidable disease, of all the countless ills which make up the terrible inheritance of ancestral error, of our social heredity and environment—when we think of these things, what a sorry compromise, what a miserable evasion, what a vast conspiracy to be blind, does not even the best side of our Christian civilization in England to-day seem? Or again, when, in the ethical realm of life values, we consider the office of the Church of Christ, in regard to the greatest of her social duties, the formation and building up of human character, and the provision of the civic securities of character in a candid, enlightened, vigorous public conscience, and we compare the ideal

citizen of the kingdom, as revealed in the Sermon on the Mount, as set forth for us in the apostolic writings, with its measure in the stature of the fullness of Christ, thinking first of all of whatsoever things are lovely, pure, just, noble, and of good report, with the actual result as seen, I do not say, in the exceptional saintly characters of Christendom, but as seen in the unit of citizen life as we know him to-day, the common man of the road, the street, the workshop, the field, the downmost man among the rudest, homeliest life of the people—a French peasant, an English agricultural labourer—surely the mind must indeed be dull, putting these two types side by side, which is not conscious of the depth of contrast.

Many of you are, no doubt, familiar with Jean François Millet's picture of "The Man with the Hoe." Some of you perhaps may know the fine interpretation of that picture by a modern Californian poet—

"Bowed by the weight of centuries, he leans  
 Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,  
 The emptiness of ages in his face,  
 And on his back the burden of the world.  
 Who made him dead to rapture and despair,  
 A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,  
 Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?  
 Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?  
 Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow

Whose breath blew out the light within this brain ?  
 Is this the thing the Lord God made and gave  
 To have dominion over sea and land ;  
 To trace the stars and search the heavens for power ;  
 To feel the passion of eternity ?

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Through this dread shape the suffering ages look ;  
 Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop ;  
 Through this dread shape humanity, betrayed,  
 Plundered, profaned and disinherited,  
 Cries protest to the Judges of the world,  
 A protest that is also prophecy.  
 O masters, lords, and rulers in all lands,  
 Is this the handiwork you give to God,  
 This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched ?  
 How will you ever straighten up this shape ;  
 Touch it again with immortality ;  
 Give back the upward looking and the light ;  
 Rebuild in it the music and the dream ;  
 Make right the immemorial infamies,  
 Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes ?”

Ah, but perhaps you say this is but the exaggerated note, the hysteric scream of a Socialist Poet !

Well, then, take this very prosaic statement of fact, made in Parliament three weeks ago, by a speaker whom no one will accuse of being either Socialist or Poet. It is a bald description of the provision made to-day in the capital of Christendom for the housing of English citizens, who, however humble they may be, have still the right to claim suffrage in the kingdom of God, have still, so at least we declare in our

Christian creeds, the possibility of highest manhood pent up in their souls, the splendid estate of God-likeness held in fee.

“The medical officer of the London County Council showed, that in London alone four hundred thousand persons were living in one-roomed houses, thirty thousand were living six in a room, nine thousand seven in a room, three thousand eight in a room. The medical officer, even for the aristocratic district of Kensington, reported a case where five adult women slept in one room—three in one bed, two under it. In Camberwell seventeen were found living and sleeping in a single room. In some cases two families lived in one room, with a partition of sacking. In the East end things were worse, and beds were let out on the eight hours’ system to night and day workers in turn. . . Moreover, crowding means unnecessary deaths. The average death-rate for London to-day is seventeen. But that average rate is made up from the total of different districts which allows such individual differences as these—St. George’s in the West, Hanover Square, thirteen; St. George’s, Southwark, twenty-three; St. George’s-in-the-East, twenty-six.”

My friends, these are significant figures, and,

alas! it is not difficult to find corresponding figures in other great towns. In Glasgow, for example, one hundred thousand, or about one-fifth of the total population, are living in single rooms, and the average death-rate is correspondingly high.

In the rural districts of England the housing question is hardly less scandalous, although the cottage question in the English village is a very old and a very stale one indeed.

More than twenty years ago I remember that, at a conference on village life held in Oxford, speaking from my experience as a country parson in this diocese, and bringing forward certain vital statistics with regard to village homes in Buckinghamshire, I asked these questions—"How is it possible, under such physical conditions as I have described, to expect from my parishioners any approach to that 'pure religion breathing household laws' which it is yet my duty as a parish priest to inculcate? How, with such huts for homes, can the distinctively home virtues, parental love, filial obedience, household thrift, cleanliness, modesty, chastity, self-respect, purity and simplicity of heart, find any room for growth? Can I honestly ascribe the meagre growth of these virtues among my people solely to failure



of individual will, or must I not rather trace it to circumstances of life and sleep so degrading as to leave no moral room for their growth? What provision can there be under such conditions of home life, not only for the three essentials of physical life—pure air, pure water, pure food—but also for the three essentials of spiritual life—‘admiration, hope, and love’?”

Well, but, my friends, after twenty years the conditions to-day are very little improved. I might quote many pieces of evidence in proof of this. Take this one paragraph only from the report of the late Commission on Labour. This is how Mr. Little, the special Agricultural Commissioner, officially summarizes the evidence brought before the Commission—

“There is abundant evidence,” he says, “to show that a large proportion of the cottages inhabited by labourers are below a proper standard for decency and comfort, while a considerable number of them are vile and deplorably wretched dwellings . . . It is impossible to read these reports without experiencing a painful feeling that too frequently and too commonly the agricultural labourer lives under conditions which are physically and morally unwholesome and offensive.”



How, then, shall we set about remedying these existing evils so discreditable to our civilization? In the first place, I think, we are forced to acknowledge that some further legislation is needed. In connection with the housing problem in the towns, at any rate, the monopoly of the landowner ought in certain directions to be further restricted; the principle of betterment should be more widely extended; something should be done to prevent the whole increase of land values, caused by the growth of population, merely going to the enrichment of individuals; eligible building sites ought not to be kept out of public use that that enrichment may be the greater. Still it is not only, or chiefly, fresh legislation that we need. It is not only the law that is to blame. Compulsory powers of the amplest description are given to the local authorities, and if they were used to their fullest extent the position of the working classes as regards their housing might be very different indeed from what it is.

What then is wrong? The motive force in an enlightened public opinion, in the various localities, to set these Acts in motion is too often absent.

Here, then, lies an obvious duty, social duty,

of the Christian community, of the Church. If it is true, as surely it is, that the Christian community as a whole is morally responsible for the character of its own economic and social order, and for deciding to what extent matters affecting that order are to be left either to individual initiative, or to the official administration of the civil power, or to the unregulated play of economic forces, then it is for the Church an occasion so to waken and to foster the public conscience, the Christian conscience of the community, as shall secure the best administration of particular systems while they exist, and the modification or change of them when this is required by the progress of knowledge, thought and life. And as, in this case before us of the housing of the people, the health-right of the working classes, and the fair and sanitary conditions of their working life, is so directly involved, I do not hesitate to say that it is the direct duty of the Church, as a matter of practical religion, to create and foster such a public opinion as shall overcome the supineness, the ignorance, the apathy, the sluggish indifference of the existing civic authorities in town and country.

When one remembers, on the one hand, that immense army of human beings—it far ex-

ceeds in its total the numbers of our killed and wounded in the South African War—annually stricken down by preventible disease, in plain words, slain either by culpable carelessness or by ignorance, scarcely if at all less culpable; and when one remembers, on the other hand, the immense engine of influence which the Church might bring to bear upon the public conscience of the community, it does indeed seem lamentable that there should be any hesitation to embark in the great work, not only of denouncing that carelessness, but also of instructing that ignorance.

To any man who believes, as I do most firmly, that the body of man is not only the shrine which contains the soul, but a shrine which, under certain conditions, fashions and modifies the soul itself, there can surely appear no task more noble, no aim more worthy of the energies of any Church or Christian community than that of securing for the industrial workers of the nation those fair and healthy conditions of home-life and work, which lead to happy, useful, and untrammelled lives, and removing those evil conditions of ignorance and squalor and disease which are among the chief obstacles at present in the way of man's attainment to that fullness and perfection of

moral stature which is the true height of his destiny.

And certainly, my friends, it is only in so far as you and I have this faith, it is only in so far as you and I know, and act upon the knowledge, that the public conscience never can be healthy when individual consciences are weak, that we shall learn how to pray the Lord's Prayer aright.

Let us never, then, take this petition—"Forgive us our sins"—upon our lips, without the determination that at least something like this shall be included in the interpretation of it to our own hearts—"Oh, our Father, forgive us our social sins, forgive us our failures in social duty, in civic obligations, in the realization of public responsibility; help us to take home to ourselves as a matter of private conscience the arraignment of public wrong-doing, of corporate irresponsibility, the fact that too often we do in the mass what no one of us would do as an individual; make us to be faithful stewards not only of the personal gifts of light or grace, but of the manifold gifts of knowledge and civilization; help us, each one of us, as far as our influence goes, in however small a degree, to build up in the community of which we are

members a strong public conscience, which shall be zealous for great causes, carrying in them the hope of future progress, and creating that spirit of Christ-like courage by which the kingdom of God shall one day come upon earth, and the goal of social evolution be reached, when Christ shall reign, King of kings and Lord of lords."

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

I must hurry to a conclusion, and yet I ought not to close without emphasizing the lesson of social warning which this last clause of the Prayer seems to contain.

Every new popular movement has its foolish fanatics. And the Christian Socialist movement in the English Church is, I suppose, not free from them. There are men who speak hastily, and who appear to think that this final petition of the Lord's Prayer may be read in this way—"Deliver a man from evil environment, and then he cannot fall into temptation, but will quite naturally and spontaneously live a good life."

I cannot, of course, pretend in the few moments that remain to us to discuss the relations of the laws of heredity and environment to human life, conduct, belief, but it



would be disingenuous to ignore the influence of these two great facts of human life upon the social aspects of our religion. No intelligent Christian who knows anything of modern social problems can sincerely say, "Deliver us from evil . . . bring us not into temptation," without serious thought of the evils of vital inheritance, and the special temptations of bad and vicious environment. While, therefore, we cannot afford to ignore the facts of life, or to think that vice and pauperism and crime will ever be eradicated from society until we have learnt to regard them as symptoms of a deep and deadly disease, the tendency to which is remorselessly transmitted from generation to generation, and can be helpfully treated only by a radical and long-continued change of environment, yet we must never allow ourselves to forget that, after all, the most potent influence on character and life is a change of spiritual environment, is, in other words, what as Christians we are accustomed to call, the presence of the Holy Ghost acting at the seat of human will.

In the eternal world in which our spirits live, soul makes body, character creates environment, life, true life, always works from within outwards. That is the truth which you remember our great English poetess



grasped when she said in the well-known passage in *Aurora Leigh*—

“I hold you will not compass your poor ends  
Of barley-feeding and material ease,  
Without a poet’s individualism  
To work your universal. It takes a soul  
To move a body : it takes a high-souled man  
To move the masses, even to a cleaner styè :  
It takes the Ideal to blow a hair’s-breadth off  
The dust of the Actual. Ah, your Fouriers failed  
Because not poets enough to understand  
That Life develops from within.”

Yes, and where Fourier failed Christ wins. “Life develops from within.” We need to reiterate this doctrine. The kingdom of heaven is within you first of all. No change of condition, no bettering of environment is sufficient to make good men. No rearrangement of society, no social transformation is possible, has ever been possible, or ever will be possible, except as the application of a religious principle, of a moral development, of a strong and active common faith. And for this reason. Men may easily re-make institutions, but they do not so easily re-make themselves. It is indeed a law of social forms, of national institutions, that they are always expressive of national character. That is indeed the ground for the common statement, the perfectly true statement, that legislation which is too far in advance of public opinion is

always futile. National institutions come into existence bearing of necessity the impress of national character; they live only so long as it supplies them with vitality. To change institutions for the better we need to change men for the better. And to do this we need, and shall ever need, religious motive. A great, a momentous social revolution, it is true, waits to be accomplished. But the social revolution must succeed, not precede, a revolution of thought. We might be all quite safely Socialists to-morrow, provided only we were quite sincerely Christians to-day.

To sum up, then, in conclusion:—

I. To know that Social Order is based on the Fatherly will of God, to know that our filial relationship with the Heavenly Father through Christ is the ground for our faith that social evolution is true, that evolution is the way that God makes things come to pass, that there is an order of society which is best, and that towards this order humanity is gradually being led according to a definite Divine plan—this is to be able to pray the Lord's Prayer aright.

II. To believe that the present kingdom of Christ is the ground of a true optimistic faith in Social Progress, faith that here is the kingdom, now is eternity, and that therefore, in the

idea of its Founder, the Church, the Christian kingdom had for its object the reorganization and restitution of society, no less than the salvation and deliverance of the individual, and that in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ the eternal principles of the Divine plan, the laws of the kingdom of Heaven are revealed—this is to be able to pray the Lord's Prayer aright.

III. To know that Social Justice requires that our daily bread should be God's bread, given in return for honest work, not thieves' bread, devil's bread, filched from our fellows, our swindled, cheated brothers or sisters, to know that wealth is only legitimately earned when it is the result of services rendered which minister to life and help on the common good—this is to be able to pray the Lord's Prayer aright.

IV. To know that the law of Social Duty, the law of Christ's kingdom, is the law of service, and that that kingdom is to be advanced, not only by the conversion of individuals, but by the gradual raising of social customs, by the transforming of institutions, to cherish social ideals, to dream dreams and to see visions, and to hold fast, in spite of broken hopes, to the faith that God will bring life to its perfect

end at last—this is to be able to pray the Lord's Prayer aright.

V. To know that Heredity and Environment are facts of human existence, but to know also that however bad the vital inheritance, it may be modified and changed by good environment, and yet that the most potent of all influences upon human character is change of spiritual environment; to know therefore that social reform must begin first in the sacrifice of self, and the building up of individual character; that the public conscience can never be healthy where individual consciences are weak, but to know also that environment counts for much; and that as all life is of the kingdom of God, the Church of Christ is concerned in the ways of His disciples, however secular they may seem to be, and must help to build up the civic life of the nation, and of every sphere of action which belongs to it, in justice, righteousness, and the fear of God—this is to be able to pray the Lord's Prayer aright.

THE END



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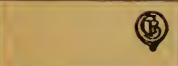
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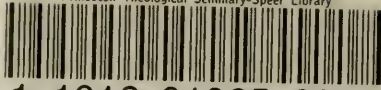
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